# "I knew there was going to be a serious tipping point and I was racing towards it"

***Content warning:*** *This story contains references to alcohol use and other sensitive issues.*

Alcohol wasn’t a big factor in Rebekah’s life before she started her dream career in nursing.

Rebekah was pulled into the culture of drinking alcohol as a coping mechanism at the end of a long shift.

“There was no debriefing or offers for counselling. You just got on with it, I think that’s why the nurses drank so much, because it was a way of letting off steam,” she said.

“Some of the things we saw and dealt with in my early nursing days were horrendous.”

Rebekah’s life changed shape through the years, her two children became independent, she finished university and then underwent a major surgery, which became a dramatic turning point in how she used alcohol.

“I think when I stopped studying and didn’t have to be places and running around after the kids, that left a huge void,” she said.

“My husband definitely noticed a change. I found if I went out, I just couldn’t moderate my drinking.”

Rebekah found herself staying home to drink instead of spending time with friends, and her anxiety worsened.

She knew she needed to seek support and turned to a friend who was a health professional.

“I was just so scared of where I was headed,” she said.

Rebekah was able to see a psychiatrist soon after and hasn’t had an alcoholic drink since that first appointment.

This year, she celebrated five years of not drinking alcohol.

Once she stopped drinking, Rebekah’s journey wasn’t simple. She turned to exercise and trialed support programs until she found the one that worked best for her.

Five years since she cut out alcohol, Rebekah has rediscovered her love of art, she volunteers with therapy dogs to support people in her community and is very close to her family and loved ones.

Rebekah wants to be part of the changing conversation about alcohol, to help others know they aren’t alone.

“It comes at a cost every time I talk about it, but no one is talking about it and so many women have reached out to me,” Rebekah said.

“When I had my issues, I had no one to reach out to without being judged, or people telling me I was silly, or I’m fine.

“I knew I wasn’t fine; I knew there was going to be a serious tipping point and I was racing towards it. So, if I can help one person by sharing my story, that’s a good thing.”

*If you have experiences to share that can help people know they’re not alone, please share your story through our*[***Voices of Change project.***](https://fare.org.au/voicesofchange/)